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C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIJING 005943

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E.O. 12958: DECL: AFTER KOREAN REUNIFICATION  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PARM](#) [MNUC](#) [EAID](#) [KN](#) [KS](#) [CH](#)  
SUBJECT: DPRK TO STAFFDEL: WE WANT TO DEEPEN RELATIONS

Classified By: Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Aubrey Carls  
on. Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

¶1. (C) Summary: DPRK officials lamented the technical difficulty of the denuclearization process and indicated a desire to continue deepening relations with the United States during StaffDel Baron's visit to Pyongyang August 28 to September 1. The DPRK officials expressed frustration that the United States is unwilling to normalize relations with the DPRK until after denuclearization, and further indicated that denuclearization should apply to the entire Korean Peninsula, not just North Korea. The officials said that while the DPRK opposes U.S. troops in South Korea, if relations are normalized the matter can be further discussed. DPRK officials expressed thanks for U.S.-provided aid following the recent floods. End Summary.

¶2. (C) Senate Foreign Affairs Committee staffer Jeffrey Baron and Congressional staffer Isaac Edwards (of Senator Murkowski's (R-AK) office) gave Poloff a readout of their August 28-September 1 DPRK trip upon their return to Beijing September 1. They did not provide specific names of North Korean contacts, for fear that those people could later be the subject of persecution.

#### Willingness to Deepen Relations

¶3. (C) According to the readout, DPRK MFA officials repeatedly expressed to StaffDel Baron a desire to "improve relations" with the United States, up to and including full normalization. The officials said that normalizing relations would be a sign of trust, and that once trust is established, there would be no need for "even a single nuclear weapon." The DPRK officials said that while the DPRK currently opposes U.S. troops in South Korea, the issue could be "further discussed" once normalization is achieved. They also indicated that normalization could play a role in facilitating the denuclearization process, stating that "denuclearization must be reached via normalization." When StaffDel Baron explained the unlikelihood that even a single Congressperson would be willing to endorse normalization while the DPRK maintained nuclear capacity, DPRK officials responded with great frustration, shouting that such logic is "beyond common sense."

#### Denuclearization Should Be Peninsula-Wide

¶4. (C) DPRK officials told the delegation repeatedly that denuclearization should involve the removal of nuclear weapons not just from North Korea, but from the entire Korean Peninsula. Asked if they were under the impression that U.S. nuclear weapons are stored in South Korea, the officials indicated that the United States is providing South Korea with a "nuclear umbrella," and that denuclearization should also include verifiable removal of "nuclear capability" from the Peninsula, such as that provided by nuclear-capable U.S. submarines and war ships.

#### Technical Difficulties of Denuclearization

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¶5. (C) DPRK officials spoke at length on the technical difficulties the DPRK faces in the course of denuclearization, particularly concerning the disposal of radioactive material. They further stated that, in addition to technical difficulties, shutting down the light reactor at Yongbyon would be a "bold decision" politically, because the reactor was created entirely by North Koreans using indigenous technology.

#### Flooding

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¶6. (C) DPRK government officials told StaffDel Baron that recent flooding inundated 540,000 acres of farmland and destroyed between 10 and 60 percent of all crops in North Korea. Over 300,000 people have been left homeless, and hundreds have died. The officials expressed appreciation for the USD100,000 in U.S. Government assistance, as well as for the assistance of Worldvision and Mercy Corps, two American NGOs.

¶7. (U) StaffDel Baron did not have an opportunity to clear this cable.  
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